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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR THE YEAR 1946.



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THE WILLITON RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

To the Chairman and Members of the Council.

Gentlemen,

It is my privilege to present to you my Annual Report upon the health and sanitation of your District, for the year 1946.

The District extends over an area of 97,000 acres, and for about 32 miles along the shores of the Bristol Channel.

The civilian population of the District is estimated at 12,450, and the estimated number of inhabited houses is 3,775.

The Rateable Value is £65,057, and the sum of £266 : 2s : 2d., is represented by a penny rate.

VITAL STATISTICS.

The Registrar General's Return shows 192 live births of which 86 were males, and 106 females, and there were six still births. The Birth-rate is therefore, 15.42 per 1,000 population.

The Registrar General's Return of Deaths shows 173, (94 males and 79 females), giving a death-rate of 13.90 per 1,000 population.

The number of deaths of Infants under one year were five, which gives an Infant Mortality of 26.04 per thousand live births.

There were no deaths from Measles, Scarlet Fever or Diphtheria.

HEALTH SERVICES.

A Hospital, known as the Taunton and District Joint Hospital is situated at Taunton, and patients suffering from infectious diseases, other than Small Pox, are sent here when isolation cannot satisfactorily be effected at home. A steam disinfecter is provided at Tivington for the treatment of infected bedding and clothing. For the prompt removal of patients from their homes to the Hospital, a motor ambulance is maintained.

The County Authorities have a Small Pox Hospital at Polden Hills, to which any case occurring in the District can be admitted. The County Authorities also have a Tuberculosis Dispensary at Minehead, at which the Tuberculosis Officer attends every Thursday, and to which all the residents in the District can go for examination.

A Lady Health Visitor visits cases of Tuberculosis, where this is considered necessary, and reports upon it. Care Committees have been formed in the District who provide extra nourishment in needy cases. In such cases, a shelter is provided on the recommendation of the County Tuberculosis Officer.

There is no Institution in the District which provides for unmarried mothers, other than the Public Assistance Institution.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES.

Infectious Disease.

No. of Cases
Notified.

Small Pox.....	Nil
Scarlet Fever.....	5
Diphtheria.....	1
Enteric Fever.....	Nil
Puerperal Fever.....	Nil
Pneumonia.....	3
Encephalitis Lethargica.....	Nil
Acute Poliomyelitis.....	Nil
Ophthalmia Neonatorum.....	Nil
Puerperal Pyrexia.....	1
Puerperal Sepsis.....	Nil
Cerebro-Spinal Meningitis.....	Nil
Erysipelas.....	Nil
Measles.....	1
Whooping Cough.....	Nil
Chicken Pox.....	11

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Diphtheria.

A supply of Diphtheria Anti-toxin is kept by the M.O.H., and can be supplied at any time when required, and in doubtful cases, swabs are sent to the County Laboratory for examination.

Puerperal Fever, Puerperal Pyrexia, Puerperal Sepsis and Ophthalmia Neonatorum.

Arrangements regarding Puerperal cases are made by the County Authorities as follows :-

<u>Hospital.</u>	<u>Class of Cases Admitted.</u>
Bristol Royal Infirmary.....	O.N. P.F. P.P.
Bridgwater Hospital.....	O.N. P.F. P.P.
Wells & District Cottage Hospital.....	O.N. P.F. P.P.
Yeovil & District Hospital.....	O.N. P.F. P.P.
Taunton Isolation Hospital.....	O.N.
Chard & District Hospital.....	F.F. P.P.

Nurses.

Application is made by the Doctor in charge of the case direct to the County Medical Officer of Health, for a Nurse for Ophthalmia Neonatorum cases.

For cases of Puerperal Fever and Puerperal Pyrexia, usually the Nurse associated with the case is retained, but in special cases a fully trained Nurse in addition, is sent, if application is made direct to the County Medical Officer of Health, explaining the special necessity.

Tuberculosis.

Thirty-seven cases were notified, thirty-five respiratory, and two non-respiratory.
There were four deaths, two respiratory, and two non-respiratory.

HOUSING.

During the year, no new houses have been completed either by the Council or by private owners, but the erection of twenty-one new houses is in progress for private owners, and six new houses are in course of construction by the Council.

WATER SUPPLIES.

Private enterprise is chiefly responsible for pipe-borne water in most of the Villages of the District, the District Council being responsible for comparatively few. For instance, there are private water supplies in sixteen Villages, in eleven villages the supply belongs to the District Council, leaving seven without a piped water supply.

By an arrangement with the County Authorities, the Private and Public water supplies are periodically examined, by this means a defective supply can soon be discovered.

Most of the seven Villages without a piped water supply are scattered, and the inhabitants depend upon isolated springs and wells. Improvements to the supplies at Cutcombe, Porlock and Monksilver are necessary, and schemes are in the course of preparation.

DRAINAGE & SEWERAGE.

Most of the larger Villages have a system of piped sewers which are kept in good working order.

A scheme is being prepared for re-sewering Stogursey, and the provision of a satisfactory outfall.

There are no closely built or populous centres in the District where closets on the conservancy system remain in any great quantity. There are still, however, many scattered privies and earth closets in the District, and these are to be found in every Parish.

REFUSE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL.

The collection of house refuse in the District was dealt with by the Council in a very thorough manner, and practically the whole of the Rural Area had its refuse collected. The area of collection and frequency was as pre-war.

Dumps are provided as follows :-

1. At Bossington, to serve Luccombe, Selworthy, Wootton Courtney, Porlock and Minehead Without.
2. At Dunster, with a forced draught incinerator, to serve Dunster, Timberscombe, Cutcombe, Carhampton, Withycombe, and half the Parish of Old Cleeve.
3. At Woolston, to serve Williton, Treborough, Luxborough, half the Parish of Old Cleeve, Nettlecombe, Elworthy, Brompton Ralph, Monksilver, Clatworthy, Stogumber, Bicknoller and Sampford Brett.
4. At Stringston, to serve Stringston, Dodington, Stogursey, West And East Quantoxhead, Kilve, Holford, and Kilton.

The collections are made fortnightly for Porlock, Williton and Dunster, and monthly elsewhere. The whole of the collections are made by means of a modern covered dustless motor-vehicle, and there is no waste or unsightliness during transit.

SUMMARY OF WORK DONE BY THE PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

Inspections.

Housing Act, 1936	222	Reinspections	175
Public Health Act, 1936	139	"	9
Food & Drugs Act, 1938	96	"	19
Rats & Mice (Destruction) Act, 1919	23	"	37
Factories Act, 1937	5		

Public Health Administration.

The Public Health Staff consists of Mr. R. B. Perrett, Chief Sanitary Inspector, and Mr. J. D. Hackford, Additional Sanitary Inspector, both of whom hold the Certificate of the R. S. I., for Sanitary Inspectors, and also the Meat and Foods Inspectors Certificate.

Mr. R. J. Ashman is a full-time Clerk to the Department.

In addition to the routine work, the Department was also engaged in carrying out the Rural Housing Survey.

Of a total of 3,033 working class houses in the District, at the end of the year, 490 had been inspected. The Survey reveals numerous houses of a low standard and considerable disrepair, resulting from seven years of war-time building restrictions.

More attention was given to the destruction of rats and mice, and the appointment of a full-time operator was considered.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant,

C. R. Hill-Cuthbert
C. R. Hill-Cuthbert

Medical Officer of Health to the
Rural District Council of Williton, Somerset.

